

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (EO TAGS SUBJ LINES ADDED)

1. GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTRY ISSUED SEP 23 FOLLOWING COMMUNIQUE: FONMIN MOLINA, ROWLANDS "AND THE PREMIER OF BELIZE, GEORGE PRICE, MET IN THE CITY OF PANAMA SEP 21-22, 1976, THROUGH THE KIND COOPERATION OF THE PANAMANIAN AUTHORITIES, TO PURSUE THE NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT RESOLVING THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND GUATEMALA WITH RESPECT TO BELIZE. IT WAS AGREED THAT ANOTHER MEETING, AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, WOULD BE HELD IN THE NEAR FUTURE."

2. IN ADDITION TO COMMUNIQUE, FONMIN MOLINA TOLD REPORTERS HE HAD "SATISFACTORY IMPRESSIONS BUT NOTHING DEFINITIVE" TO REPORT FROM THE TALKS. HE SAID IT WAS HOPED THE NEXT MEETING WOULD TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWO MONTHS. ANOTHER PAPER QUOTED HIM AS SAYING THAT ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATOR HAD NOT YET ARRIVED AT DEFINITIVE DECISION, SE ADELANTO BASTANTE EN ELLA (CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS WAS MADE). MOLINA SAID PANAMA TALKS HAD DEALT WITH " ASPECTS THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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HAVE TO DO WITH SOME POSSIBLE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND PROBLEMS OF SECURITY OF THE AREA." EDUARDO RODRIGUEZ, DIRECTOR BELIZE AFFAIRS, IS QUOTED AS TELLING REPORTERS THAT THE MEETING COULD BE CALLED "SUCCESSFUL, INASMUCH

AS THERE HAVE BEEN ADVANCES IN THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES TO RESOLVE THE BELIZE CONTROVERSY. THE GOOD WILL OF BOTH PARTIES WAS ONCE AGAIN IN EVIDENCE IN THIS MEETING, AS IT WAS IN THOSE THAT PRECEDED IT. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT NONCONCUSION WAS REACHED, (THE NEGOTIATIONS) ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK (SE VA POR BUEN CAMINO)." PR DEPUTY CRUZ SALAZAR, WHO ALSO ATTENDED THE MEETING, USED THE SAME PHRASE.

3. MOLINA ALSO TOLD PRESS THAT MEXICAN PRESIDENT-ELECT LOPEZ PORTILLO'S STATEMENTS ON MEXICAN INTEREST IN BELIZE PROBLEM "DID NOT SURPRISE US. OF COURSE WE COMPLETELY REJECT THOSE PRETENSIONS. WE HAVE DONE SO IN VARIOUS FORA INCLUDING THE UN."

4. GRAFICO GAVE PROMINENT DISPLAY TO AN EFE STORY FROM NEW YORK ON A PRESS CONFERENCE BY UK AMBASSADOR IVOR RICHARDS, WHO SAID BRITISH REPLY TO CLAIMS ON BELIZE, GIBRALTAR AND FALKLANDS WAS ONE WORD: "NO. OUR ATTITUDE IS BASED IN ALL THREE CASES ON RESPECT FOR PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION...WE THINK IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO ASK THOSE WHO LIVE IN THOSE PLACES WHAT THEY THINK. IF THE PEOPLE OF BELIZE SAY THEY WANT TO BE GUATEMALAN, WE HAVE NO OBJECTION." IMPARCIAL SEP 24 MADE RICHARDS' STATEMENTS THE SUBJECT OF A BITTER EDITORIAL. STATEMENTS DETRACTED CONSIDERABLY FROM GOG'S EFFORTS TO INDICATE PROGRESS IN TALKS.

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